

INTOLERANCE: EQUAL AND LESS EQUAL IN THE ROMAN WORLD

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ALL ANIMALS are equal, but some animals are more equal than others": the well-known commandment of Orwell's *Animal Farm* would certainly have met with the approval of Q. Aurelius Symmachus, the Roman senator and famous orator of the last decades of the fourth century A.D. In harmony with the elitist mentality and legislative practice of his time he had, in fact, advanced a theoretical justification of the nonequality of the upper classes before the law and, consequently, of the legitimacy of different applications of laws and punishments according to the quality of the individual. The identification of social rank with moral quality was thus considered self-evident by the establishment of the time. Symmachus himself, on another occasion, had defined his own class as "the better part of mankind" (*pars melior humani generis*) with perfect candor.¹

Although for centuries the foundation of a common identity had been seen in human nature itself (even in its mere animality, as the Cynics believed), and although this identity necessarily implied a natural equality of rights and of freedom of expression (the ἰσηγορία and παρρησία of Greek and Latin political and philosophical terminology), this liberty and equality were in reality limited to precisely defined groups.² The dialectic between identity and otherness has accompanied man's historical vicissitudes since the remote beginnings of communal life; indeed, it has been their driving force, through an unceasing flux of conflict and

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1. *Epist.* 9. 40: see S. Roda, *Commento storico al libro IX dell'Epistolario di Q. Aurelio Simmaco*, Biblioteca di studi antichi 27 (Pisa, 1981), pp. 164–65; *Symm. Epist.* 1. 51. 1 (A.D. 376, to Praetextatus), ed. J.-P. Callu, vol. 1 (Paris, 1972), p. 114.

2. Sources in M. M. Sassi, "I barbari," in *Il sapere degli antichi*, ed. M. Vegetti (Turin, 1985), pp. 262–78; see also A. Momigliano, "La libertà di parola nel mondo antico," in *id.*, *Sesto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, Storia e letteratura 150.2 (Rome, 1980), pp. 403–36.

conciliation, intolerance and coexistence in endless permutations.³ Yet, when a sense of identity is achieved, it tends naturally toward a codification that leads in turn to a greater rigidity; and from this rigidity originate the unifying forces that most readily become repressive.

The phenomenon of otherness was undoubtedly manifested even in antiquity in an immense variety of situations. An important example may be found in the way women were regarded and treated. There is a clear line of descent from antiquity to the Middle Ages (and even to the present day). Aristotle had theorized that women were naturally inferior; and Philo was later to invent the dichotomy that both physiologically and symbolically equated the category of the masculine with reason (νοῦς) and that of the feminine with the sensuous (αἰσθησις). Thus he created a philosophical justification of men's domination of women. The notion of men's superiority evolved with the passing of time and was codified, for example, by Varro (*Ling.* 5. 73 "mulier . . . a mollitie; virtus ut viritus a virilitate"). It arrived in Roman culture and was transmitted thence to the Fathers of the Church and to the Middle Ages. This very identification of the feminine with physical, intellectual, and moral frailty caused women to be assimilated to social groups that were considered inferior politically, economically, and culturally. *Mulierculae, vilis plebecula, inperiti* (that is, silly women, the uncouth masses, the ignorant) are often lumped together with the Jews both by pagan philosophers and by Christian thinkers in their arguments against magic, superstition, and heresy. The Christians were able to enhance their polemic with biblical justifications, in particular the part played by Eve in the fall of Adam.⁴

The year 195 B.C. witnessed a singular episode. The question whether or not to repeal the *Lex Oppia* had divided the senate into two opposing

3. See the general comments of H. Ahrweiler, "L'image de l'autre et les mécanismes de l'altérité," in *Rapports. XVI^e Congrès international des sciences historiques (Stuttgart, 25 août–1er septembre 1985)*, vol. 1: *Grands thèmes, méthodologie, sections chronologiques* (Stuttgart, 1985), pp. 60–66.

4. See K. E. Borresen, *Subordination et équivalence: Nature et rôle de la femme d'après Augustin et Thomas d'Aquin* (Oslo and Paris, 1968); C. Vatin, *Recherches sur le mariage et la condition de la femme mariée à l'époque hellénistique* (Paris, 1970), pp. 33 ff.; R. A. Baer, *Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female* (Leiden, 1970); C. Scaglioni, "La donna nel pensiero dei Padri greci," in *In nome della donna* (Milan, 1976), pp. 28–50; the collection of essays in *Etica sessuale e matrimonio nel cristianesimo delle origini* (Milan, 1976), esp. the contributions by C. Scaglioni (on John Chrysostom), L. F. Pizzolato (on Ambrose), and E. Samek Lodovici (on Augustine); M.-T. d'Alverny, "Comment les théologiens et les philosophes voient la femme," *CCM* 20 (1977): 105–28; C. Settis Frugoni, "L'iconografia del matrimonio e della coppia nel Medioevo," in *XXIV Sett. di Studi del Centro italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo: Il matrimonio nella società altomedievale (22–26 aprile 1976)*, vol. 2 (Spoleto, 1977), pp. 901–63; M. Vegetti, *Il coltello e lo stilo: Animali, schiavi, barbari, donne alle origini della razionalità scientifica* (Milan, 1979); *Misoginia e maschilismo in Grecia e a Roma. Ottave giornate filologiche genovesi (25–26 febbraio 1980)* (Genoa, 1981); M. C. De Matteis, ed., *Idee sulla donna nel Medioevo: Fonti e aspetti giuridici, antropologici, religiosi, sociali e letterari della condizione femminile* (Bologna, 1981); L. Cracco Ruggini, "Discussion," following C. Fohlen, "La femme dans la société," in *Actes du XV^e Congrès international des sciences historiques (Bucarest, 10–17 août 1980)*, vol. 4.1 (Bucharest, 1982), pp. 314–22; E. Lévy, ed., *La femme dans les sociétés antiques: Actes des Colloques de Strasbourg (mai 1980 et mars 1981)* (Strasbourg, 1983), esp. the contributions by M. Woronoff, M. Weinsanto, A. Podlecki, C. Nancy, and S. Saïd; U. Mattioli, *Ἀσθησια καὶ ἀνδρεία: Aspetti della femminilità nella letteratura classica, biblica e cristiana* (Rome, 1983).

factions that differed greatly in their opinions of the importance of women in society. The *Lex Oppia* was a sumptuary law passed in 215 B.C., at the most critical moment of the Second Punic War, after the defeat at Cannae. It forbade ladies of the upper classes the display of luxury in dress and carriages. Twenty years later women demanded its repeal, because the return of prosperity had made the measure uselessly restrictive: they held public demonstrations, intimidated magistrates, and even resorted to picketing.⁵ Cato, then at the height of his prestige as consul, insisted that the law remained necessary to support the control of the *pater familias* over women, beings who, though undoubtedly inferior, were nonetheless dangerous because of their turbulence and intemperance (*indomitum animal*). The tribunes M. Fundanius and L. Valerius, on the other hand, sustained the women's cause in the conviction that the very moral and psychological inferiority of the *mulierculae* guaranteed the head of the family's unimpeded power to make decisions: help from the law was thus not necessary. Evidently the debate did not concern the political role of women but originated from two different evaluations of the power relationships between the sexes, both rooted in the common and unshakable belief that women should remain subordinate to men within the family because they were naturally inferior creatures. It is of secondary importance, though still significant, that the *Lex Oppia* was in the end repealed by the *comitia*, although it was theoretically possible to nullify it with legal objections (as Livy tells us, these objections were not made). This suggests that Cato's obsession with γυναικοκρατία was not entirely without foundation and makes plausible Plutarch's attribution to Cato of the observation (*Cat. Mai.* 8. 3) "All men command women, we Romans command all men, but our women command us," an observation that acknowledges the decisive role played by women through men even within a patriarchal society. Centuries before, Homer had arrived at the same conclusion in the *Odyssey* (6. 303–15) and voiced it through Nausicaa ("Do not be misled," she said to Odysseus, "my father is the lord, but it is my mother who decides"). The consul Caecina Severus from Volterra, in A.D. 21, was also to express his disgust and concern at the intrusions of Roman ladies into politics, their ambition to dominate tribunals, and even their management of the legions through their husbands; and he did this in terms rather similar to Cato's.⁶

There were, to be sure, divergent positions regarding women. Certain pagan philosophers (such as Musonius Rufus and, later, Plutarch) and certain Christian theologians (such as Clement of Alexandria) even went so far as to admit the equality of virtue between men and women, the Christians calling on Scripture for support (Gal. 3:28 "in Christo non est Iudaeus neque Graecus, non est servus neque liber, non est masculus

5. Livy 34. 1–8; cf. P. Desideri, "Catone e le donne (il dibattito liviano sull'abrogazione della 'Lex Oppia')," *Opus* 3 (1984): 63–74.

6. Tac. *Ann.* 3. 33; cf. M. Sordi, "La donna etrusca," in *Misoginia e maschilismo*, pp. 49–67.

neque femina").⁷ Still others preferred to explain certain outstanding examples of female *virtus* by hypothesizing an exceptional *virilitas* in women who were *masculi* in spirit. This may be seen in the *Passio Perpetuae*, in the heterodox Gospel of Thomas, in the *Historia Lausiaca*, and in the *Chronicon* of Thietmar, bishop of Merseburg, who, as late as the beginning of the eleventh century, points to Liudgard, the wife of Conrad the Red, as an example of conjugal courage, admirable for her "virile patience" (2. 39, *MGH: SS. RR. Germ.* 9:89).⁸

I have dwelt on certain characteristic aspects of the discrimination against women in antiquity principally because it provides a clear example of the gap that sometimes existed between the official system of values and reality, between juridical theory and daily practice. Though there was occasional conflict, situations of real intolerance never occurred; indeed, the system of values was largely renewed already in the imperial age.⁹ In contrast, the manifestations of intolerance that were most significant, most deeply motivated, and most debated even at a theoretical level concerned ethnological, cultural, and religious differences.

The question of racial prejudice should be dealt with first, because it precedes, both chronologically and conceptually, the other two. It is well known that the term βάρβαρος originally meant no more than "foreigner," a person speaking in an incomprehensible way (cf. βαρβαρόφωνος already in Homer). But this concept reflects a clear awareness of diversity, at least at a linguistic level, that made natural a shift of meaning, from those without articulate speech (λόγος) to those without reasoning power (a concept expressed by the same term, λόγος)—those, that is, without the faculty that distinguishes man (who is able to speak and to reason) from other, inferior "animals." The awareness of otherness remained among the Greeks—or at least among Greek intellectuals—through the late Hellenistic period and beyond.¹⁰

7. Cf. Diog. Laert. 6. 12 and 7. 175; Clem. Al. *Paedag.* 1. 10. 1, *Strom.* 6. 8. 58, 4-6; Musonius Rufus, p. 14 Hense; Plut. *De mul. vir.* 242 f.; C. Favez, "Un féministe romain, Musonius Rufus," *Bulletin de la Société des Études de Lettres* 20 (1933): 1-8; id., "Les opinions de Sénèque sur la femme," *REL* 16 (1938): 335-45; S. Weiller Romanin Jacur, "Il concetto di femminilità e la donna nel contesto biblico," *La Rass. mens. di Israel* 33 (1967): 357-63; J. P. Broudhoux, *Mariage et famille chez Clément d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1970), pp. 139 ff.; Vatin, *Recherches sur le mariage*, pp. 33 ff.; C. E. Manning, "Seneca and the Stoics on the Equality of the Sexes," *Mnemosyne* 26 (1973): 170-77; E. Giannarelli, *La tipologia femminile nella biografia e nell'autobiografia cristiana del IV secolo* (Rome, 1980).

8. Cf. Cracco Ruggini, "Discussion," with the sources quoted in n. 21 there; J. Anson, "The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: The Origin and Development of a Motiv," *Viator* 5 (1974): 1-32; É. Patlagean, "L'histoire de la femme déguisée en moine et l'évolution de la sainteté féminine à Byzance," *StudMed* 17 (1976): 597-623; Giannarelli, *La tipologia femminile*, pp. 82 ff.; R. Lizzi, "Monaci, mendicanti e donne" nella geografia monastica di alcune regioni orientali, *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti*, Classe Sc. Mor., Lett. ed Art. 140 (1980-81): 341-55.

9. Cf. P. Veyne, "La famille et l'amour à Rome," *Annales (ESC)* 33 (1978): 34-63; V. A. Sirago, *Femminismo a Roma nel primo impero* (Soveria Mannelli, 1983).

10. Cf. *Grecs et barbares*, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 8 (Geneva, 1961); I. Opelt and W. Speyer, "Barbar (Nachträge zum RAC)," *JAC* 10 (1967): 251-90; M. Sordi, ed., *Conoscenze etniche e rapporti di convivenza nell'antichità*, Contributi dell'Istituto di storia antica Un. Cattolica 6 (Milan, 1979); A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975); "Grecs et barbares," *Ktema* 6 (1981): 3-87.

Italic-Roman culture adopted at an early stage the terminology and conceptions of the Greeks. An example may be found in Plautus, who provides the earliest uses in Latin of the terms *barbarus*, *barbaria*, and *barbaries*. In his plays (derived from Greek models and spoken by Greek characters) these terms signify "Latin" or "Roman" and "Italy," according to a national and ethnological vision that is typically Greek.¹¹ But the problem is to discover when, how, and why there arose among the Romans a well-defined mental image of "the barbarian" associated with fear and a sense of constant jeopardy. I believe that this idea took shape from the fourth century B.C. on and was associated with the Gauls, that is, with those Celts who had settled in Italy. Although the Gauls had begun to pass through the Alps as early as the beginning of the sixth century B.C., this movement did not at first arouse any notable reactions: there had been many movements of peoples since the remotest times. The first great shock, which left a deep mark on both the Roman and the Greek historical tradition, was the expedition of the *Galli Senones* against Rome in 387/86 B.C.¹²

A foreign people that repeatedly constitutes a threat arouses superstitious terror. And indeed, everything about the Gauls seemed different, and this difference was therefore the source of a dismay that became ever greater in the popular imagination and heightened Roman feelings of triumph after hard-won victories. Traces can be found both in literary works and in the monuments: for example, certain series of *denarii* of the third to first centuries B.C. on the sites of the most spectacular victories over the Celts, such as those at Civitalba near Sentino (295 B.C.) and at Talamone in Etruria (225 B.C.), or the vases of Cales produced in the third and second centuries. The representations of the battles with the Celts or of the storied sacking of Delphi by the Celts in 280 B.C. may have become stereotypes; but they had a meaning for the times and places in which they were made. In them, as in the literary sources, the Gauls are invariably depicted as giants, with shaggy hair and outlandish clothes and weapons. They are said to practice the *inmanis ac barbara consuetudo* of human sacrifice and to be head-hunters.¹³ Against the Gauls, the Romans themselves inaugurated the so-called "rites of aversion," which were both uncommon and ferocious, involving such measures as the burial alive in the Forum Boarium of couples of Greeks and Gauls. This rite was resumed several times at

11. *Poen.* 598, *Capt.* 492 and 884–85, *Curc.* 150, *Mil.* 211; see also M. Lindsay, ed., *Glossaria Latina*, vol. 4 (Paris, 1930; repr. Hildesheim, 1965), p. 136 (Pomp.-Fest.). Cf. L. Cracco Ruggini, "Simboli di battaglia ideologica nel tardo ellenismo (Roma, Atene, Costantinopoli; Numa, Empedocle, Cristo)," in *Studi storici in onore di O. Bertolini*, vol. 1 (Pisa, 1972), pp. 177–300 (esp. 59–61, concerning Irenaeus of Lyons and Gregory of Nyssa); E. Gabba, "Political and Cultural Aspects of the Classicistic Revival in the Augustan Age," *CA* 1 (1982): 43–65 (esp. 59–61, concerning Eratosthenes).

12. Livy 5.36.9, 38.4, 39.5; Flor. 1.7. Cf. Y. A. Dauge, *Le barbare: Recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilisation*, Collection Latomus 176 (Brussels, 1981)—a large collection of sources, but devoid of historical perspective.

13. Cf. C. Peyre, "Tite Live e la 'férociété' gauloise," *REL* 48 (1970): 277–96; *I Galli in Italia*, ed. E. Campanile (Rome, 1978); *I Celti in Italia* (Pisa, 1981).

moments of particular danger and was undoubtedly inspired by similar sacrifices once practiced by the Etruscans, who had been the first to undergo the simultaneous (and at times concerted) attacks of the Gauls and of the Greeks from Syracuse.¹⁴

Through most of the republican period the Gauls continued to be seen by the Romans as possessing this marked otherness. Only they among all Rome's enemies were regarded as *beluae* whom it was necessary to exterminate if Rome was to survive. Sallust affirms this, as does Livy; both refer to the time when the Cimbri and the Teutones were on the point of pouring down into the peninsula through the undefended Alpine passes. But by the first century B.C., when the Gauls had largely been assimilated into the Roman social and cultural world, the longstanding "fear of Gaul" (*metus Gallicus*) had disappeared. Caesar and Cicero claimed that there existed a consanguinity between Gauls and Romans, while Timagenes discovered the myth of a Trojan origin of the Gauls, similar to that of the Romans.¹⁵

Caesar also invented the "Germanic barbarities" and, as it were, codified a precise sociological distinction between Gauls and Germans, who had both previously been believed to be Celtic races. With brilliant insight, Caesar succeeded in persuading his contemporaries of the truth of this distinction, in order to further a precise political plan of his own. He sought a justification, at an ethnographic level, both for subjugating the three Gauls and for renouncing any conquest of the lands beyond the Rhine. He therefore took care, in his *Commentary on the Gallic War*, clearly to define the non-Celtic character of the Cimbri and declared that the Rhine was the frontier between two worlds—the Gallic and the Germanic—that were ethnically different and irreconcilable. The individual and collective vices of the Germanic peoples (*feritas* especially, and then *crudelitas* and *adrogantia*) were thus vigorously emphasized, whereas Caesar liked to recall the *virtus*, *magnitudo animi*, and *sollertia* of the Gauls—though not omitting their *levitas*, *iracundia*, *temeritas*, and technical *inperitia* (he does not attribute ferocity to them). The Gauls, Caesar pointed out, were rich and loved wine, whereas the Germans did not possess these characteristics in the least. Perhaps he intended this promising distinction especially for the meditation of the Roman merchants who exported wine. The argument that expansion into the Germanic world would not be profitable (since this world was unproductive, inhospitable, and protected by obscure prodigies) became

14. The rite was perhaps resumed in 349 B.C. and then certainly in 228, 216, and 113 B.C.: see A. Fraschetti, "Le sepolture rituali del Foro Boario," in *Le délit religieux dans la cité antique (Table Ronde, Rome, 6-7 avril 1978)*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 48 (Rome, 1981), pp. 51-115.

15. Sall. *Jug.* 114. 1-2; Livy 7. 24. 4-6; on the assimilation of the Gauls: Just. *Epit.* 43. 4. 1-2; Caes. *BGall.* 1. 32. 2; Cic. *Att.* 1. 19. 2, *Fam.* 7. 10. 4; Amm. Marc. 15. 9. 2-7 (referring to Timagenes). Cf. E. Malaspina, "Uno storico filobarbaro: Pompeo Trogo," *RomBarb* 1 (1976): 57-69; R. Chevallier, *La romanisation de la Celtique du Pô: Essai d'histoire provinciale*, BEFAR 49 (Rome, 1983); B. Luiselli, "Il mito dell'origine troiana dei Galli, dei Franchi e degli Scandinavi," *RomBarb* 3 (1978): 89-121.

central to the Roman debate after the defeat of Varus in the Teutoburg Forest in A.D. 9 and later found its way into Tacitus' *Germania*.¹⁶

Once it had become obvious that the Gauls could be assimilated, Roman horror at their inhuman stature, passions, and hatreds thus irrevocably shifted, together with Rome's frontiers, from the Celts to the Germanic tribes: from the time of the Germanic campaigns of Augustus, for example, there is the case of Velleius Paterculus, whose loathing for Germanic *feritas* arose from his own experience as an officer on the Rhine frontier just after the massacre in the Teutoburg.¹⁷ Yet the Germanic peoples, together with other "barbarians" from newly conquered territories, soon began to appear within the Empire and thus to be better known. They were not only slaves or gladiators but also, and especially, mercenaries and bodyguards to the various generals and emperors; a little later, they made up the auxiliary cohorts. They were appreciated for their warlike nature, for certain fighting techniques peculiar to them, and for their nonparticipation in the feuds of the civil wars, feuds in which many Roman legions allowed themselves to be involved.¹⁸

The facts so far presented seem to make it clear that the Romans did not suffer from "racial" prejudice in the modern sense of the term. There was no suggestion of biological inferiority that would justify conquest and subjugation, as there commonly has been in the colonialist ideologies of the modern world. The Romans did, however, firmly believe that different climates produced different constitutions and temperaments in different peoples. Vitruvius, for example, strongly supported such a view in the age of Caesar and Augustus, emphasizing Italy's happy geographical situation in the middle of the world: because the peninsula providentially combined in its nations the endurance of the northern peoples and the quickness of the southern, the people of Italy were fit to dominate the rest.¹⁹

The work of Tacitus is particularly important for the problem that concerns us here. Tacitus spends many pages describing the physical characteristics of the Gauls, the Germanic peoples, and the British in a context of dispassionate biological observation. His *Germania* already

16. Cf. G. Walser, *Caesar und die Germanen: Studien zur politischen Tendenz römischer Feldzugsberichte*, Historia Einzelschriften 1 (Wiesbaden, 1956); P. Jal, "Le rôle des barbares dans les guerres civiles de Rome de Sylla à Vespasien," *Latomus* 21 (1962): 8-48; H. Callies, "Die fremde Truppen im römischen Heer des Prinzipats und die sogenannten nationalen Numeri: Beiträge zur Geschichte des römischen Heeres," *BRGK* 45 (1964): 130-227; A. N. Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome* (London, 1967); L. Cracco Ruggini, "Pregiudizi razziali, ostilità politica e culturale, intolleranza religiosa nell'impero romano," *Athenaeum* 46 (1968): 139-42; E. A. Thompson, *The Early Germans* (Oxford, 1965); id., *Romans and Barbarians* (Madison, 1982).

17. Vell. Pat. 2. 106. 2, 117. 3-4, 118. 1, 119. 5-6; see also Ov. *Tr.* 4. 3 and F. Della Corte, "Ovidio e i barbari," *RomBarb* 1 (1976): 57-69.

18. Cf. Jal, "Le rôle des barbares"; Callies, "Die fremde Truppen."

19. See Vitruvius, *De arch.* 6. 1. 3-11, with Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice*, and Cracco Ruggini, "Pregiudizi razziali." On the concept of ethnicity in the early Middle Ages, existing only as a subjective and malleable category, see P. Geary, "Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct in the Early Middle Ages," *Mitt. anthropologischen Gesell. in Wien* 113 (1983): 15-26.

reveals a lessening of the traditional repugnance for the ferocity of the barbarians—perhaps because, unlike Caesar and Velleius, Tacitus had not experienced it. But although in his *Germania* Tacitus rejects commonplace opinion, his judgment overall is less positive than is generally believed. For example, he praises the marriage customs of the barbarians and the absence among them of luxury, of usury, and of the overbearing power of freedmen: that is, he praises not the warlike virtues that in fact characterized these peoples but rather the civil customs of an earlier and better Rome, customs that had gradually been corrupted among the Romans themselves. Tacitus' ostensible subject thus serves as a pretext for reaffirming the *mos maiorum* and for restating its value in the face of the problems of contemporary Roman society. This tendency can be observed still more clearly in Tacitus' treatment of the theme of *libertas*, which is of central importance in the *Agricola* (concerning Boudicca), in the *Annals* (concerning Arminius), in the *Historiae* (concerning the revolt of the Batavian Iulius Civilis in A.D. 69–70), and in the *Germania*. We do not have an exaltation of barbaric peoples—at times there reemerges the traditional Roman contempt for their superstitious usages or their immoderate love of drink and gambling—but we find instead the idealization of their chiefs as exemplary *vindices libertatis*.²⁰

The Romans' attitude toward the Aethiopes may well bear a similar interpretation. The term "Aethiopes" denoted all those races whose skin was black. These peoples "who lived near the sun" were reputed to be pious, long-lived, and blessed, and to excel in religious matters, in philosophy, and in the astrological sciences. This fame had been theirs since the time of Homer and persisted from Mimnermus and Herodotus down to Philostratus (*Vita Apollonii*) and pseudo-Callisthenes (*Romance of Alexander*) in the early third century A.D. The color of their skin, darkened by the rays of the sun, was simply explained by the environment in which they lived and was often contrasted "to the constant blossoming of pure white flowers from the soul" (thus a non-Christian epigram from Antinoë in Upper Egypt, of the third century A.D.). There is no trace of the disturbing implications found in certain lines of William Blake, however similar in some respects they may appear (thus Blake's "The Little Black Boy": "I am black, but oh my soul is white. / White as an angel is the English child, / but I am black as if bereaved of light").²¹

20. Cf. C. Wirszubski, "*Libertas*" as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Principate, Cambridge Classical Studies (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 160–67; Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice*, pp. 32–61; M. Sordi, "Dalla 'koiné eirene' alla 'pax Romana,'" in *La pace nel mondo antico*, ed. M. Sordi, Contributi dell'Istituto di storia antica Un. Cattolica II (Milan, 1985), pp. 3–16 (on Tac. *Agr.* 30. 4).

21. See C. Schmidt, "Eine griechische Grabinschrift aus Antinoë," in *Aegyptiaca: Festschrift für G. Ebers* (Leipzig, 1897), p. 100 = W. Peek, ed., *Griechische Versinschriften*, vol. I (Berlin, 1955), pp. 341–42 (no. 1167); the epigram may be compared with Blake's *Songs of Innocence*, or with Kipling's "Gunga Din," in *Barrack-Room Ballads*: "An' for all 'is dirty 'ide / 'E was white, clear white inside. . . / You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!" For further sources, see F. M. Snowden, Jr., *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Graeco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970); L. Cracco

A change in attitude can be traced, however, from the age of Decius (A.D. 249–51) onward. For the first time after centuries of peaceful neighborliness, there began to build on the southern borders of Egypt and the Cyrenaica the threatening pressures that were destined to create many grave problems for the Empire down to the time of Justinian. Thus, parallel to a more precise definition of the Ethiopians (be they *Blemmyi*, *Nobades*, or *Aksumitae*) as an articulated political, economic, and commercial reality that had to be reckoned with, there emerged in literature the notion of the Ethiopians as a dangerous military force (for example, in a popular romance such as the *Aethiopica* by Heliodorus, of the pretetrarchic age). And it was in Egypt, in northern Africa, and in Syria-Palestine that the ancient identification of the color black with wickedness and ill omen generated the idea of the black man as a metaphor of evil: especially in the Christian hagiographic literature of these regions, it was associated with the idea of sin. According to his βίος, Moses, the Ethiopian ascetic, was able to free himself from his subhuman “negritude,” from his “natural tendency toward evil,” and reveal “a shining soul”—though in a “black body”—only thanks to a miracle of God. In this way was born the representation of the Devil as a repulsive and fierce Ethiopian, an image destined to become the standard representation of the Devil in literature and art from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century.²²

Thus we arrive at the last stage in the relationship between the Roman world and barbarism, that of late antiquity. In the fourth and fifth centuries antibarbarian sentiment, practically unknown to the high Empire, emerged ever more forcefully, as Goths, Alamans, Swabians, Vandals, Alans, Huns, and other border-dwellers increased their pressure at the frontiers as a result of the large-scale migrations of peoples over all of northern Europe. Not only were there raids and deep penetrations into the territory of the Empire that were more or less promptly halted and driven back; but also individually or in swarms—and especially through a series of agricultural and military settlements on the Roman side of the *limes* that the state had allowed in order to lessen the pressure at the frontier and to exploit the fresh energy of the barbarians as peasants and soldiers—countless barbarians entered the Empire in the army and, little by little, even penetrated the ranks of the high military and civilian bureaucracy, thus transforming the social physiognomy of

Ruggini, “Il negro buono e il negro malvagio nel mondo classico,” in *Conoscenze etniche*, pp. 108–35; R. Lonis, “Les trois approches de l’Ethiopien par l’opinion gréco-romaine,” *Ktema* 6 (1981): 39–56 (closely following my contribution without quoting it). Very rich iconographical documentation is provided by J. Devisse, *L’image du noir dans l’art occidental*, vol. 2.1: *Dès premiers siècles chrétiens aux ‘grandes découvertes’: De la menace démoniaque à l’incarnation de la sainteté* (Fribourg, 1979).

22. Concerning Moses, see *Apophth. Patrum* 3–4 (PG 65:284); further sources in Cracco Ruggini, “Il negro buono”; ead., “Leggenda e realtà degli Etiopi nella cultura tardoimperiale,” in *Atti del IV Congresso internazionale di studi etiopici* (Roma, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 10–15 aprile 1972), vol. 1 (Rome, 1974), pp. 141–93; C. Froidefond, *Le mirage égyptien dans la littérature grecque d’Homère à Aristote* (Aix-en-Provence, 1971); E. Malaspina, “Mitizzazione e demitizzazione dei sapienti indiani nel mondo greco-romano,” *RomBarb* 6 (1981–82): 189–234.

the Roman state from within before threatening its outward stability. Already in 401—five years before the great invasion of Gaul—the Gallic-Roman nobleman Sulpicius Severus, rereading the Book of Daniel from a political point of view, produced in his *Chronica* an interpretation that formerly had been given by Hippolytus, the antipope of the Severan age. In the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the colossus' feet of iron and clay are a metaphor for "Roman soil occupied by foreign or rebellious peoples," or for the *barbarae nationes*, especially the Jews, who had "infiltrated the army, the cities, and the provinces of the Empire without adopting Roman customs." One should note the insistence on the cultural heterogeneity of barbarians and Romans, which here causes the Jews to be included among the barbarians because of their separatism. A few years later Jerome wrote his *Commentary on Daniel* (about 407), in which he identified the feet of the biblical colossus with the diminished strength of the Empire, whose defense had come to be entrusted to a barbarized and no longer homogeneous army. This interpretation aroused the wrath of Stilicho, the Vandal general and guardian of Honorius, who advocated a policy of strong and authoritative conciliation with the barbarians.²³

Meanwhile the official iconography of the barbarians across the borders became stereotyped, as the campaigns against them became more frequent, harsher, and not always successful. These stereotypes may be seen, for example, on the coins of Magnentius and of Valentinian II: the enemy is represented as destroyed, trampled, and dragged by the hair by the triumphant emperor; the subhuman bestiality of the vanquished is vividly marked, just as it had been in the case of the Ethiopians in the third and fourth centuries. Sometimes the defeated barbarian is depicted as a snake with a human head or as a snake-footed giant, in the manner of usurpers, heretics, and the Devil (this symbolic device had been present in pagan art of the third and fourth centuries—in the *Panegyrici Latini* and in the mosaics of Piazza Armerina—and was later Christianized). In contrast, the imperial monuments of the second century—for example, the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, veritable pictorial narratives of the triumphs against the Dacians and Marcomans beyond the Danube—represent the barbarians with lineaments of noble pride, as the Gauls had been represented on Roman coins and monuments of the republican age.²⁴

23. Jer. *Comm. in Dan.* 1, visio 2 (CCL 75A:794–95); cf. id. *Comm. in Esaiam* 10 (praef.), 11 (CCL 73:396–97, 427–28). Cf. L. Cracco Ruggini, "De morte persecutorum" e polemica antibarbarica nella storiografia pagana e cristiana," *RSLR* 4 (1968): 433–47; ead., "I barbari in Italia nei secoli dell'impero," in *Magistra barbaritas: I barbari in Italia* (Milan, 1984), pp. 3–51; ead., "La fine dell'impero e le trasmissioni dei popoli," in *La storia: I grandi problemi dal Medioevo all'età contemporanea*, vol. 2: *Popoli e strutture politiche* (Turin, 1986), pp. 1–52.

24. Cf. G. Belloni, "'Aeternitas' e annientamento dei barbari sulle monete," in *I canali della propaganda nel mondo antico*, ed. M. Sordi, Contributi dell'Istituto di storia antica Un. Cattolica 4 (Milan, 1976), pp. 220–28; id., "Figure di stranieri e di barbari nelle monete della repubblica romana," in *Conoscenze etniche*, pp. 201–28; L. Rossi, *Rotocalchi di pietra: Segni e disegni dei tempi sui monumenti trionfali dell'impero romano* (Milan, 1981); L. Cracco Ruggini, "Bagaudi e Santi Innocenti: Un'avventura fra demonizzazione e martirio," in *Tria corda: Scritti in onore di A. Momigliano*, ed. E. Gabba, Biblioteca di Athenaeum I (Como, 1983), pp. 121–41 (esp. 121–25).

Relations with the barbarians were undoubtedly complex and produced very different attitudes in different geographical, social, and cultural contexts. The success of Christianity added subtle religious nuances. In the eastern regions of the Empire public opinion, both pagan and Christian, was in general thoroughly hostile to the barbarians and advocated their forcible expulsion from all the structures of the state. In this context the representation of barbarians as bestial, uncivil, and despicable beings was often accompanied, in Neoplatonist writings from the eastern Empire, by expressions of profound repugnance for Christian monks, who were believed to be as uncouth, ignorant, and violent as the barbarians themselves; and more than once it was maintained that the monks were allied with the invaders, whom they had converted to the Arian faith. The Neoplatonist sophist and historian Eunapius of Sardis, for example, takes this line with regard to the Goths of Alaric. He claims that in 395 the monks opened the doors to Greece at Thermopylae and enabled Alaric to invade the country as far as Athens.²⁵

Antibarbarian prejudice thus remained limited to and rooted in culture and ideology. And it was for this reason that the very authors who most despised the barbarians could, without any real contradiction, grant the highest esteem to individuals who, though of barbarian origin, were "wholly Greek in customs, culture, and [pagan] religion": in much this way, for example, Eunapius, Zosimus, Libanius, and Ammianus Marcellinus spoke of generals such as Fravitta, Richomer, Arbogastes, and Genseridus.²⁶

In the Latin West, meanwhile, during the fourth and fifth centuries, the barbarian presence was regarded by turns with acquiescence and conservative, "patriotic" hostility. Hostility was voiced both by pagan senators such as Q. Aurelius Symmachus and (years later) Rutilius Namatianus, and by men of the Church such as Ambrose, a *clarissimus* of Rome and later bishop of Milan. Still shocked by the disasters inflicted by the Goths in Illyricum after the battle of Adrianople in A.D. 378, Ambrose went so far as to identify the political and military crisis of his time with the end of the world, the *occusus saeculi* brought on by the apocalyptic dominance of Gog and Magog—a biblical metaphor

25. Frags. 37, 42, 55, 60, 75 Müller; cf. Cracco Ruggini, "Simboli," pp. 272–87, followed by F. Paschoud, "Romains et barbares au début du V^e siècle après J.-C.: Le témoignage d'Eunape, d'Olympiodore et de Zosime," in *La nozione di 'Romano' tra cittadinanza e universalità: Da Roma alla terza Roma, Documenti e studi* (Roma, 21–23 aprile 1982), vol. 2 (Naples, 1984), pp. 357–67; R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, vol. 1 (Liverpool, 1981), pp. 1–26 (esp. 19); R. Lizzi, "Significato filosofico e politico dell'antibarbarismo sinésiano: Il 'De regno' e il 'De providentia,'" *RAAN* 56 (1981): 49–62. Concerning Themistius (esp. *Or.* 16 [A.D. 383] and 34 [A.D. 384]), see G. Dagron, *L'empire romain d'Orient et les traditions politiques de l'Hellénisme: Le témoignage de Thémistios*, Travaux et Mémoires 3 (Paris, 1968); L. J. Daly, "The Mandarin and the Barbarian: The Response of Themistius to the Gothic Challenge," *Historia* 21 (1972): 351–79.

26. Eunap. frags. 80, 82; Zos. 5. 20, 46; Liban. *Or.* 1. 219–20, 232, *Epist.* 785, 866, 891, 972, 1007, 1024; Amm. Marc. 31. 12. 15. Cf. J. M. O. Flynn, *Generalissimos of the Western Roman Empire*, (Edmonton, 1983).

applied to the Goths. Moreover, he believed that the fate of the Church was to follow the same parabola as that of the Empire; he therefore justified deplorable practices such as usury or the exporting of large quantities of wine to the barbarians beyond the Rhine and Danube, on the grounds that these were instruments suitable for their destruction. The barbarian peoples, in his judgment, did not belong to the humanity a Christian should love. In the same way, in an Africa that was still briefly to remain Roman, Augustine considered quite permissible the raids of marauding merchants beyond the *limes Africae* to capture slaves, as if these people were "mere animals." When merchants subjected Romans to the same treatment, he strongly condemned them.²⁷

According to Ambrose, the Romans had only one thing in common with the barbarians: idolatry. While exalting the conversion of many Roman nobles to Christianity, he causes a personified Rome, a Rome old and wise and repentant, to say (*Epist.* 18. 7 [A.D. 384]): "Only this had I in common with the barbarians: that before I did not know God." From this want of salvation there later arose a drive toward conciliation with the barbarians, who were seen as potential new recruits for the faith or as the instrument of a providential punishment for the corruption of society, for the fiscal oppression of the Roman state, and for its iniquitous application of the laws (I am thinking here especially of Orosius and Salvian). Soon the only real "barbarians" were to be those outside the Christian world. Patrick, the evangelist of Ireland's *barbarae gentes* in the first half of the fifth century, wrote to Coroticus, "a ruler of the Breton coast," indignantly complaining that he had dared to carry out a bloodthirsty raid in a region of Ireland that was being converted and was therefore, in the community of faith, very much like the Bretons—"like you Romans." Evidently Patrick took "Roman" to mean only "Catholic." A century later Cassiodorus was to exalt the Goths (even though they were Arians) as the truest custodians and continuers of Roman civilization: thus "Gothic history" had even become for him "Roman history."²⁸

27. Ambr. *De fide* 2. 137–38 (A.D. 378), *De Tobia* 51 and *De Helia* 54 (A.D. 389), *Exp. Ev. secundum Lucam* 10. 10 (A.D. 390); August. *Epist.* 10*.5 (CSEL 88:49). Cf. M. C. Lepelley, "La crise de l'Afrique romaine au début du V^e siècle, d'après les lettres nouvellement découvertes de Saint Augustin," *CRAI* (1982), pp. 445–63; J. Rougé, "Escroquerie et brigandage en Afrique romaine au temps de Saint Augustin (Ep. 8* et 10*)," in *Les lettres de Saint Augustin découvertes par Johannes Divjak: Communications présentées au colloque des 20 et 21 septembre 1982* (Paris, 1983), pp. 177–88.

28. Jer. *Epist.* 107. 2–3 (A.D. 400); Prudent. *Contra Symm.* 2. 816–19; Oros. 7. 41; Salv. *De gub. Dei* 4. 13. 61, 14. 66, 5. 5. 21, 8. 36, 7. 22. 94–97, 99 (A.D. 440); Patr. *Epist. ad milites Corotici*, SC 249:134 ff. Cf. A. Mandouze, "L'Église devant l'effondrement de la civilisation romaine," *RHPH* 41 (1961): 1–10; E. A. Thompson, "St. Patrick and Coroticus," *JThS* 31 (1980): 12–27; W. Berschin, "Ich Patricius . . . : Die Autobiographie des Apostels der Iren," in *Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 9–25. On Latin and Byzantine sources (pagan and Christian) concerning barbarians, see n. 25 above and P. Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques*³ (Paris, 1964); M. Pavan, *La politica gotica di Teodosio nella pubblicistica del suo tempo* (Rome, 1964); id., "Sant'Ambrogio e il problema dei barbari," *RomBarb* 3 (1978): 167–87; F. Paschoud, *Roma Aeterna: Études sur le patriotisme romain dans l'Occident latin à l'époque des grandes invasions* (Neuchâtel, 1967); id., "L'Église dans l'empire romain: Tendances dans l'Église contre et pour l'empire," in *Actes du VI^e Congrès international de la FIEC (Budapest, 3–8 septembre 1979)*, vol. 2 (Budapest,

The contrast between the bestial and nonbelieving barbarian and the pious and civilized Roman leads us to the last important aspect of the dialectic between tolerance and intolerance in the ancient world, relations among the religions. There were essentially three great forms: paganism (in all the multiplicity of cults produced by the most varied cultural and ethnic matrices), Judaism, and Christianity. These three forms corresponded to the threefold division of mankind—Romans (i.e., pagans), Jews, and Christians—that had been formulated and accepted since the earliest years of the imperial age.

It was the Christian apologists of the second century, probably inspired by prophetic passages in the Bible, who defined themselves as a "third people" (*tertium genus*) in opposition to the *gentiles* and the circumcised.²⁹ These early generations of Christians still felt themselves to be foreigners in the Greco-Roman world, in religion and culture as well as ethnically, and they proudly emphasized this alienation together with the revolutionary innovations of their faith; but in the hundred years that followed, many things changed. The Christians began to feel less need to distinguish themselves from the Jews; at the same time, they began to recognize in the Empire a providential setting for their faith, which had become cosmopolitan. The expectation of the end of time fell away, and a new, optimistic conception emerged of an Empire desired by God, created with Christ and for Christ under the reign of Augustus, which had been so laden with miracles and signs. Especially in the Latin West Christianity advanced its cause by presenting the Christian as the good citizen par excellence. Accordingly, the habit of defining the Christians as a "third people" seemed pointless at best; at worst, it could even be dangerous, as a possible cause of repression. Tertullian was the first to disavow the ancient formula of the apologists. He proclaimed that the Christians were not a separate nation, alien to and intrusive in the Roman world; they were the true Romans, indeed, the best among them. The Jews, by contrast, constituted a real nation and were "evil" (as they had already been characterized by Seneca and Plutarch), a nation that, though defeated by Rome, had succeeded in dictating laws to the victors

1984), pp. 197–207; Cracco Ruggini, "Simboli"; ead., "I barbari"; J. Fontaine, "Chrétiens et barbares: Un aspect éclairant du débat entre Tertullien et la cité romaine," *Rom Barb* 2 (1977): 27–57; A. G. Hamman, "L'actualité de Salvien de Marseille: Idées sociales et politiques," *Augustinianum* 17 (1977): 382–93; C. Corbellini, "Ambrogio e i barbari: Giudizio o pregiudizio?" *RSCI* 31 (1977): 343–52; F. Fabbrini, *Paolo Orosio: Uno storico* (Rome, 1979), pp. 400–422, with the discussion by F. Paschoud, *RSLR* 19 (1983): 139–42; M. Simonetti, "L'intellettuale cristiano di fronte alle invasioni barbariche," in *Il comportamento dell'intellettuale nella società antica. Settime giornate filologiche Genovesi* (22–23 febbraio 1979) (Genoa, 1980), pp. 93–117. Concerning the lost *Historiae Gothicae* of Cassiodorus, see Cassiod. *Var.* 9. 25 (A.D. 533); L. Cracco Ruggini, "Nobiltà romana e potere nell'età di Boezio," in *Atti del Congresso internazionale di St. Boeziani* (Pavia, 5–8 ottobre 1980) (Rome, 1981), pp. 73–96 (esp. 77–79).

29. Cf. L. Cracco Ruggini, "Pagani, ebrei e cristiani: Odio sociologico e odio teologico nel mondo antico," in *XXVI Sett. di Studi del Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo: Gli ebrei nell'Alto Medioevo* (30 marzo–5 aprile 1978), vol. 1 (Spoleto, 1980), pp. 15–117. On the Jewish roots of the expression "third people" (Zech. 13:8–9, Isa. 19:24), see L. Baeck, "Das dritte Geschlecht," in id., *Aus drei Jahrtausenden: Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte des jüdischen Glaubens* (Tübingen, 1958), pp. 222–29.

and had gained many privileges, even while remaining faithful to the law of Moses through superstitious and obscure rites, scorning the *leges Romanae*.³⁰

It was on this very contrast between Roman and Judaic law, between civilization and barbarism (only the "barbarism" of the Jews had ever successfully infiltrated the heart of the Empire), that the Roman theory of anti-Judaism had already insisted through the voices of Juvenal, Quintilian, Tacitus, Marcus Aurelius, and Flavius Philostratus. Moreover, the great Jewish revolts of the second century in Egypt, Palestine, and the Cyrenaica had consolidated the reputation of the Jews as a seditious and troublesome people, a reputation the Christians were quick to exploit to their own greater glory as defenders of the Empire. Christ, the king of heaven whom the Jews had betrayed, became from the fourth century on the protector and inspirer of the earthly sovereign. How, then, could the Jews not be considered potential traitors to any earthly rule sanctioned by that ruler of heaven whom they themselves had denied? In the second half of the fourth century Ambrose of Milan and Chromatius of Aquileia quote the Old and the New Testament to compare the betrayal of a sovereign with the betrayal of Christ by Judas; and such quotations also motivate the exclusion of Jews from the *militia* (the imperial service, military and civil), ratified in 438 by a constitution of Theodosius II that defined them as "enemies of the supreme Majesty"—that is, God—"and of the Roman laws." Here one sees the roots of the accusations, recurring throughout medieval and modern times, of political betrayal by the Jews: through the supposed murder of Charles the Bald by the Jewish doctor Zedechias, in the ninth century; in support of Frederick Barbarossa in Milan, in 1162; through an evil conspiracy—with the Moorish (and Muslim) king of Granada and the lepers of Aquitania—to spread death by poisoning wells, in 1321; by carrying the plague to many cities in Switzerland, Spain, Belgium, and Germany, in 1348; through an alleged attack on the health of Elizabeth of England by the Jewish doctor Lopez, in 1594; and so on.³¹

30. *Apol.* 24. 9, 36. 1–2 (CSEL 69:69–70, 87, ca. A.D. 197), *Scorp.* 10 (CSEL 20:168, A.D. 212), *Ad nat.* 1. 8. 10–11 (CCL 1:22); *Sen. frag.* 41 ap. August. *De civ. D.* 6. 11. 10 (CCL 47:183); *Plut. De superst.* 8. Cf. M. Sordi, "A proposito di una iscrizione di Salona," *RFIC* 99 (1961): 301–8; W. H. C. Frend, "A Note on Tertullian and the Jews," in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 10.1: *Papers Presented to the Fifth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 1967*, TU 107 (Berlin, 1970), pp. 291–96.

31. *Juv.* 14. 96–106; *Quint. Inst.* 3. 7. 21; *Tac. Hist.* 5. 2–7; *Philostr. VA* 5. 33; *Amm. Marc.* 22. 5. 5 (referring to Marcus Aurelius); *Ambr. Epist.* 40. 21; August. *En. in Ps. LVIII, Sermon.* 1. 21. 2. 2 (CCL 39:744, 746), *En. in Ps. XXXIX* 13 (CCL 38:435), *Serm.* 374. 2 (PL 39:1667); *John Chrys. Or.* 4. 3 *Contra Iud.* (PG 48:875). Cf. also Cassiod. *Exp. in Ps. LVIII* 12 (CCL 97:526); the pagan Rut. Namat. *De red.* 1. 383 ff. (A.D. 417/18); *Nov. Th.* 3. 2. Already in the first century Apion had defined the Jews as "barbarous": see *Joseph. Ap.* 2. 68, 79, 145–48, 256, with commentary by L. Troiani, *Commento storico al "Contro Apione" di Giuseppe*, Biblioteca degli studi classici e orientali 9 (Pisa, 1977). Further sources and bibliography in H. Chrétien, *Le prétendu complot des Juifs et des lépreux en 1321* (Châteauroux, 1887); E. Wickersheimer, "Les accusations d'empoisonnement portées pendant la première moitié du XIV^e siècle contre les lépreux et les Juifs: Leurs relations avec les épidémies de peste," in *IV Congresso internazionale di st. della medicina (aprile 1921)* (Antwerp, 1927), pp. 6–7;

From the beginning of the "peace of the Church" (that is, from the age of Constantine) and steadily throughout the fourth and fifth centuries, anti-Jewish polemic of the Christians is articulated in terms of a threefold division comparable to the older distinction among pagans, Jews, and Christians. Now, however, the Christians (that is, the Catholics) have disappeared, leaving only the Jews, the pagans, and the heretics, all sharing the same ignorance of the true faith. As Chromatius of Aquileia wrote in his *Sermo* 28, between 388 and 405, "the Jews seek [truth] through their law; the pagan philosophers seek it with their futile erudition; the heretics seek it, giving credence to false testimony . . . ; but all—Jews, philosophers, and heretics—seek in vain, because they do not follow the way of truth." In short, there was no longer a tripartite dialogue, but a tripartite persecution. The years between 380 and 390 were, in fact, years of extreme political uncertainty, especially in the West. The reign of Gratian, an intransigent Catholic, showed just how far Christian laws had gone toward excluding and threatening all religious minorities. The killing of the young emperor at Lyons in 384, following the usurpation of Maximus, was hailed by pagan propaganda as the "providential" death of a *persecutor*. In the following months the pagans regained ground, obtaining honors and magistracies, urging the Christian court to revoke the measures against the traditional sacerdotal colleges and to reestablish the pagan altar of Victory in the *curia Iulia* in Rome. They resolved to support the usurper Maximus, against the Christian Theodosius I, in 387–88. In 394 they supported the usurper Eugenius, who was finally defeated at the river Frigidus in a battle that later tradition regarded as a veritable "divine judgment." The Arians, in these same years, regained strength and even went so far as to solicit from the court in Milan and from the Roman senate a more equitable judgment than the one that had condemned them at the Council of Aquileia in 381. They requested (but in vain) that their orthodoxy be thoroughly examined in the light of Scripture both by learned pagans (who by now were familiar with the Old Testament) and by Jewish experts in Old Testament exegesis.³²

The Jews, for their part, obtained a hearing and justice from the usurper Maximus; for example, a synagogue destroyed by Christian violence was rebuilt in Rome. These very years witnessed the compilation (as I believe I have shown in a recent study) of that curious text, the

L. Poliakov, *Storia dell'antisemitismo*, vol. 1 (Florence, 1974), pp. 113–14; Cracco Ruggini, "Il negro buono," p. 125; ead., "Pagani, ebrei e cristiani," pp. 99–101 (with n. 131); ead., "Ebrei e romani a confronto nell'Italia tardoantica," in *"Italia Iudaica": Atti del I Convegno internazionale (Bari, 18–22 maggio 1981)* (Rome, 1983), pp. 38–65 (esp. 57 ff.); ead., "Dal 'civis' romano al 'civis' cristiano," in *Storia vissuta del popolo cristiano*, ed. J. Delumeau and F. Bolgiani (Turin, 1985), pp. 123–50; ead., "La fine dell'impero."

32. Pall. *Or. contra Ambros.* 139 (SC 267:222); cf. L. Cracco Ruggini, "Il vescovo Cromazio e gli ebrei di Aquileia," in *Aquileia e l'Oriente mediterraneo*, Ant. Altoadriatiche 12 (Udine, 1977), pp. 353–81 (esp. 358 ff.); ead., *Il paganesimo romano tra religione e politica (384–394 d. C.): Per una reinterpretazione del "Carmen contra paganos"*, Memorie dell'Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, Classe Sc. Mor., St. e Filol., serie 8, vol. 23.1 (Rome, 1979), pp. 1–144 (esp. 39–46).

Collatio legum Mosaicarum et Romanarum, a “reliquary” of legislation and imperial constitutions, down to the time of Diocletian, that are not found elsewhere. The historical and historiographical interest of this anthology of jurisprudence lies in the intentions behind its composition. It is the work of a Roman Jew who sets out to demonstrate (at times with notable distortions of the Bible in its Latin translation) the similarity and convergence of the law of Moses and classical Roman law. He deliberately chooses to ignore the legislation of Christian emperors from Constantine on, though he reveals his knowledge of it. He refutes the commonplace that the Jews were not capable of respecting Roman laws and addresses his work to a notional audience of pagan officials and magistrates at Rome. In 383 and 384 these pagans were advocating the restoration of a “lay” state (even at the cost of an armed struggle), a state in which all religions could live together with equal dignity in that “harmonious discord” in which the pagan grammarian Maximus of Madaurus, writing to Augustine (388/91), also hoped that mortal beings could honor their common Father, each in his own way.³³

It was this very atmosphere that, a few years later (403/5), induced Augustine to give up his early trust in tolerance and open discussion, as he became convinced that the forceful intervention of state authority was necessary against every sort of heretic and nonbeliever.³⁴ For their part, the pagans continued the struggle for the survival of their cults, repeating what Symmachus had dared to affirm before the consistory of Valentinian II in 384: we all “gaze at the same stars, the same sky is over our heads, we live in one single universe: what does it matter which doctrine each of us uses to seek the truth? One cannot arrive at such a sublime secret by one path alone.” Ambrose of Milan replied: “That which you do not know, we have learned from the voice of God. That which you are seeking through conjecture, we possess irrefutably, since we have gathered it from the very wisdom and truthfulness of God. Your ways do not agree with ours.” I believe that Symmachus was inspired by *Oratio* 5 of Themistius, a pagan sophist and philosopher of Constantinople. It had been given at the consular festivities of Jovian—thus, immediately after the sudden end of the pagan restoration carried out by Julian. The oration had exalted the principle of religious tolerance. It had declared that the Divinity was pleased that everyone should find in his own will and freedom of conscience the way to render him honor through a fruitful ποικιλία in religion; that the paths along which εὐσέβεια traveled to attain the single and immutable truth were many; that no human violence could falsify this law, nor would the Divinity

33. Cf. L. Cracco Ruggini, “Un cinquantennio di polemica antipagana a Roma,” in *Studi patristici in onore di G. Lazzati* (Milan, 1979), pp. 119–44; ead., “Ebrei e romani a confronto”; L. Storoni Mazzolari, “Le lettere di S. Agostino ai pagani,” in *Atti dell'Accademia Romanistica Costantiniana*, vol. 4: *In onore di M. De Dominicis* (Perugia, 1981), pp. 41–63; P. Mastandrea, *Massimo di Madauros (Agostino, “Epistulae” 16 e 17)* (Padua, 1985).

34. *Epist.* 93. 16–17; cf. P. Brown, “St. Augustine’s Attitude to Religious Coercion,” in id., *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London, 1972), pp. 260–78.

accept consent imposed by intimidation; that systems built through compulsion transformed men into equivocal opportunists who would worship now at pagan temples and altars and now at Christian altars and churches, as recent experience had shown (here Themistius, though a pagan, alludes critically to the reign of Julian).³⁵

A few decades after Julian, the *Historia Augusta*—a collection of imperial biographies inspired by pagan ideology—was to contain the *Life* of Severus Alexander, who was seen as the very type of the good emperor. In an attempt to withstand the increasing intolerance of the Christians, the biography emphasizes (*Alex. Sev.* 29. 2) the impartial regard of this emperor for the holy men of paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, a regard that had induced him to place in his private chapel images of Abraham, Christ, Orpheus, and Apollonius of Tyana.³⁶

So far I have dwelt principally on the ideological aspects of the variable relations among the great religions of late imperial society. But these relations presuppose a sociological panorama that was equally variable from age to age and from region to region. Particularly striking, especially in the relations between Hebraism and the Christian world in these centuries, is the notable time lag between the legislative and ecclesiastical condemnation of the Jews and their actual exclusion from political and social life. This contradiction is, however, diminished if one looks more closely at the numbers, the distribution, and the sociological placement of Jews in the various parts of the Empire as these are revealed in the scanty legislative, epigraphic, archaeological, and papyrological evidence.

One notes that Jewish wealth in the West before the Carolingian age, when it existed at all, was always linked to the possession of land or to activities connected with the land (for example, the export of agricultural products on a large scale). On the other hand, the Jewish colonies in the East were numerous and important and played a notable part in the crafts and trades in all cities of any consequence. During the fifth century, the situation of the Jews gradually grew worse, just about everywhere: although there was no outright persecution, measures restricting their religious, political, and civil rights became harsher. But it is curious that in the East, during the very long reign of Theodosius II (404–50), legal tolerance of the Jews persisted substantially unchanged; it was accompanied, however, by a growing violence, fomented especially by the monks of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, that the imperial authorities either were not able or did not wish to eliminate. Hostile acts occurred

35. See Symm. *Rel.* 3. 10, with D. Vera, *Commento storico alle "Relationes" di Quinto Aurelio Simmaco*, Biblioteca di studi antichi 29 (Pisa, 1981), pp. 12–53; Ambr. *Epist.* 18. 8; Them. *Or.* 5 (A.D. 364), esp. 67c–70a. Besides the bibliography noted above (n. 25), see also L. J. Daly, "Themistius' Plea for Religious Tolerance," *GRBS* 12 (1971): 65–79; Cracco Ruggini, "Simboli," pp. 179 ff., especially concerning the relations between Themistius and the Roman aristocracy.

36. Cf. Cracco Ruggini, "Pagani, ebrei e cristiani," pp. 72–81; ead., "Ebrei e romani a confronto," pp. 54–61; ead., "Tolleranza e intolleranza nella società tardoantica: Il caso degli ebrei," in *Dieci prolusioni accademiche (1975–1985)* (Vicenza, 1985), pp. 189–208.

during Jewish ceremonies, synagogues were occupied or destroyed, people were massacred. By contrast, in other regions—for example, at Constantinople—a Christian spirit of missionary persuasion went to work, in part exploiting miracles (above all, therapeutic miracles) and in part using more down-to-earth inducements (gifts and other advantages to the newly converted).

Thus one gets the impression that it was predominantly the rural world, the world in sympathy with the radical fanaticism of the monks, that exacerbated the intolerance of Judaism in the various cities around which the peasantry gravitated. In Syria and Egypt, the Jewish communities were large, socially differentiated, and economically powerful. They often held an attraction, which was thought to be dangerous, for the more simpleminded Christians, with the fascination of the solemn rites of the synagogue, of prayers recited in a mysterious language, and of their awesome, all-powerful God, a God who was vengeful and thus more effective when invoked in oaths and maledictions. John Chrysostom, for example, was concerned with this attraction while he was a priest at Antioch; the monks intervened as the violent expression of this concern and, not infrequently, as the *longa manus* of the bishops. They destroyed synagogues and caused massacres. Yet the institutionalized Christianity of some large cosmopolitan cities, such as Constantinople (which was quite isolated from its own territory), avoided such turbulence and, if anything, made use of more insidious methods, while pragmatically acknowledging the local peaceful coexistence between the two components of the city population.³⁷

The Jews in the West, who had always been less numerous than those in the eastern provinces, suffered from a legislative pressure that was far more peremptory and that had begun much earlier than in the East—perhaps for the very reason that they themselves were relatively few, which made it easier for the Christian court to express a religious radicalism through the law. But actual anti-Jewish tumult and disorder appeared later in the West and was, in any case, sporadic. A policy was preferred that combined an irrevocable theological condemnation, preached with great insistence to the faithful, with the desire clearly to isolate the Jews in daily life, in order to avoid dangerous contagions. Such was the pastoral line followed, for example, by Chromatius of Aquileia at the end of the fourth century. A forerunner of Augustine, he considered the Jews beyond any possible historical redemption, like the

37. Cf. L. Cracco Ruggini, "Ebrei e orientali nell'Italia Settentrionale fra il IV e il VI secolo d. C.," *SDHI* 25 (1959): 186–309; ead., "Note su gli ebrei in Italia dal IV al XVI secolo," *RSI* (1964): 926–56; ead., "Pietro di Grado: Giudaismo e conversioni nel mondo tardoantico," in *Grado nella storia e nell'arte*, vol. 1, Ant. Altoadriatiche 17 (Udine, 1980), pp. 139–60; B. Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens dans le monde occidental, 430–1096* (Paris, 1960); A. M. Rabello, "The Legal Condition of the Jews in the Roman Empire," in *ANRW* part 2, vol. 16.2, ed. H. Temporini (Berlin and New York, 1980), pp. 662–762.

bad thief to the left of Christ on the cross (the pagans, in contrast, were given the part of the good thief, who still might be saved).³⁸

As has been said, the western Jews were few. On the whole, they did not offend any social sensibilities, nor did they arouse rivalry. They were useful, perhaps necessary, within a society that was economically and socially torpid and not at all competitive. For this reason social hostility was not dominant, and only theological hatred was freely vented, at a literary and pastoral level. The problem of the Jews took on the nature of a debate among the Christians themselves, who had to explain the disturbing persistence of the Jewish people as a "mission" imposed by God, so that they should witness the subjugation that was to be their lot from their deicide down to the end of time.³⁹ This was the explanation of Augustine. But this same theological polemic—parallel to the breaking off of real dialogue between the two parties—gradually isolated the Jews, creating a barrier around them, making them obscure and "different" beings within Christianity. This could not fail to be the remote prelude to far more tragic intolerance in the future.

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38. Chromat. *Sermo* 19, 4 (CCL 9A:91); cf. Cracco Ruggini, "Il vescovo Cromazio"; S. Boesch Gajano, "Per una storia degli ebrei in Occidente tra antichità e Medioevo: La testimonianza di Gregorio Magno," *QM* 8 (1979): 12–43.

39. See esp. August. *De civ. D.* 18, 46 (CCL 48:643–45), with B. Blumenkranz, "Augustin et les Juifs, Augustin et le Judaïsme," in id., *Juifs et chrétiens, Patristique et Moyen Âge*, Variorum Reprints (London, 1977).